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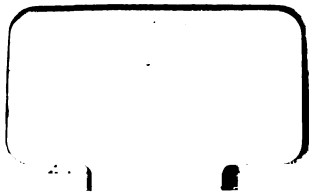


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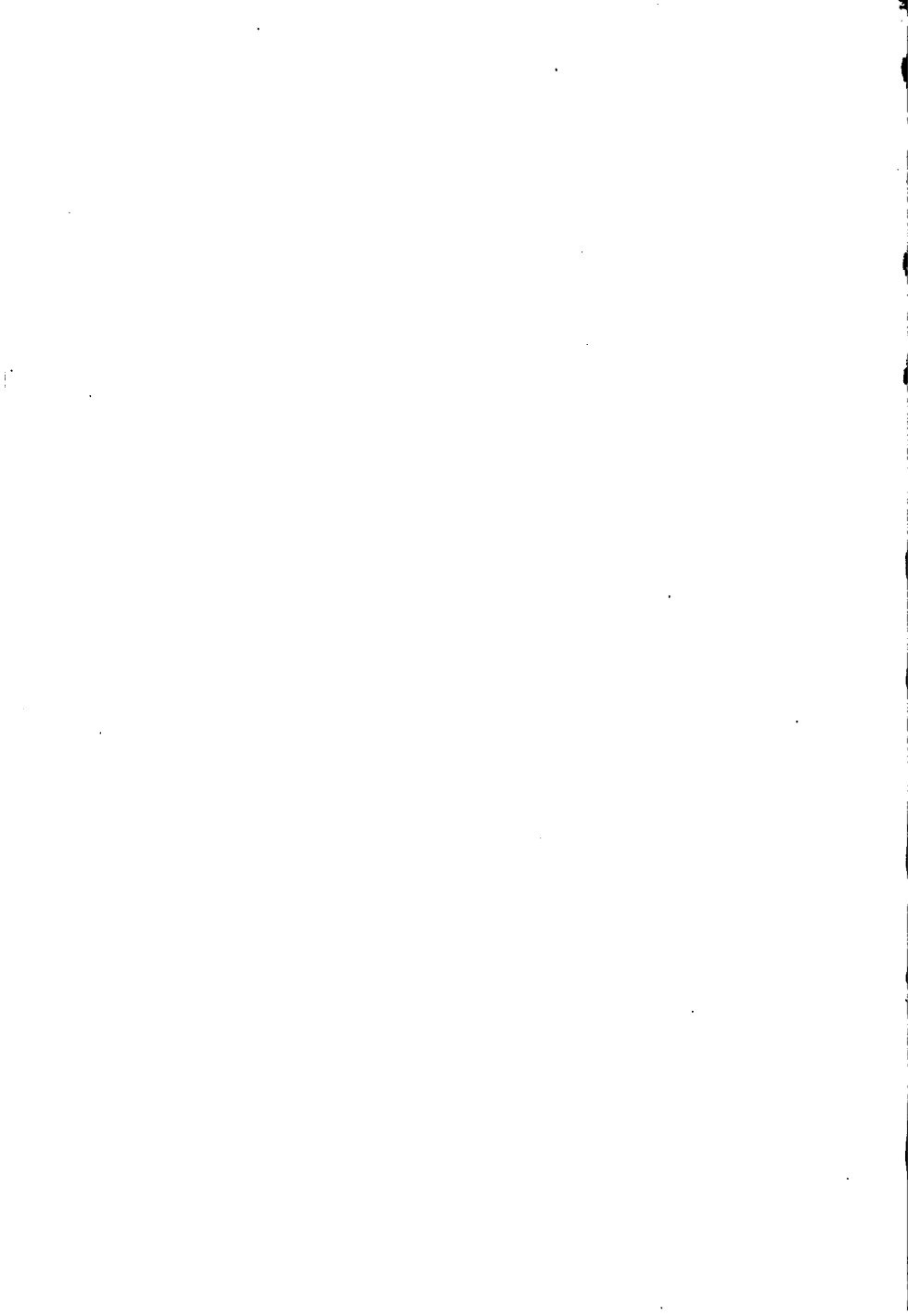
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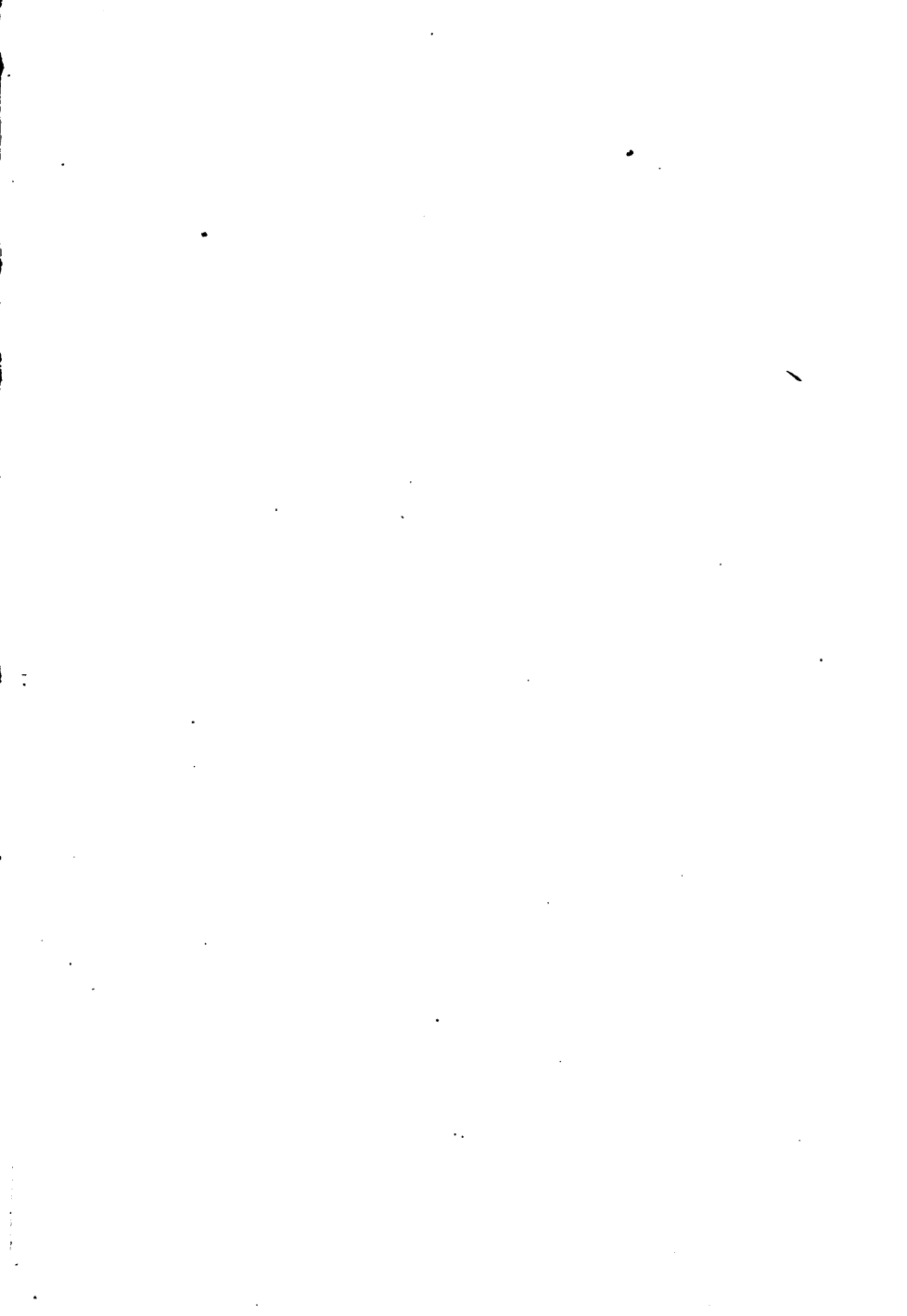






**SHOES OF THE WIND**









HILDA

# ES OF THE WIND

A BOOK OF POEMS

BY

HILDA CONRAD

Author of "Poems" etc.

With frontispiece by  
M. P.



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES & CO. PUBLISHERS  
110 NASSAU ST.



# SHOES OF THE WIND

*A BOOK OF POEMS*

BY

HILDA CONKLING

*Author of "Poems by a Little Girl"*

*With frontispiece from photograph by*

ALICE BOUGHTON



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

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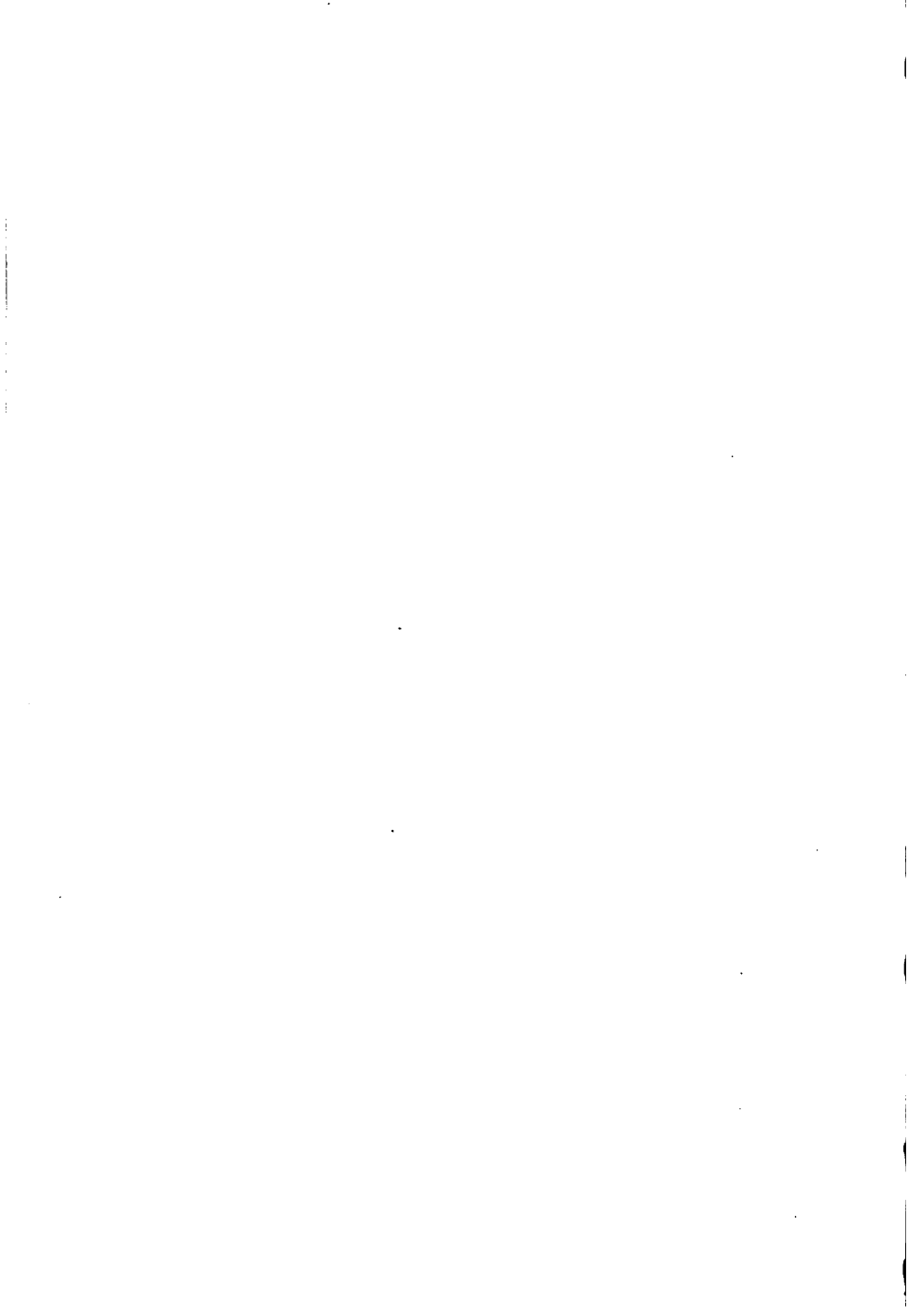
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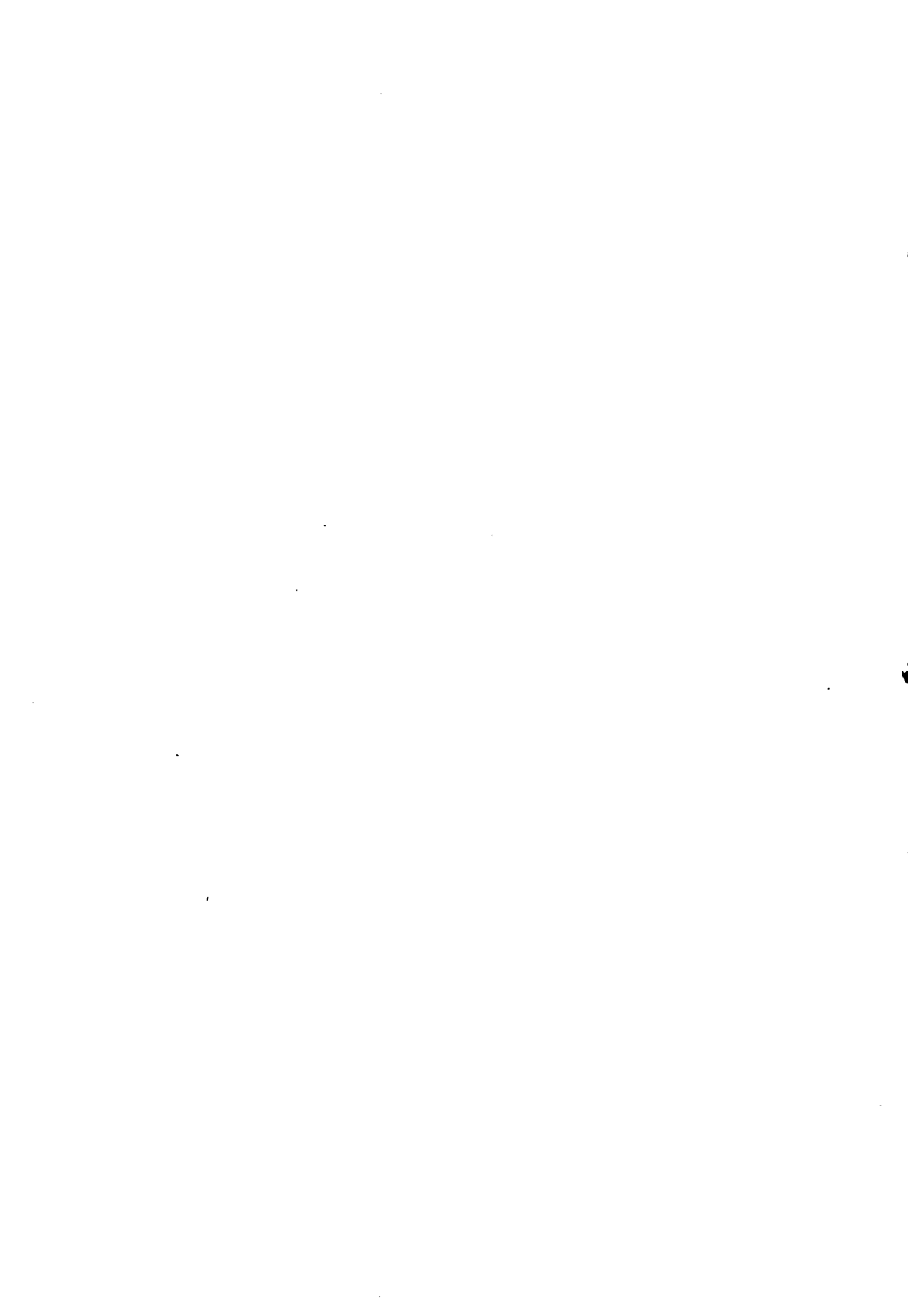
## TO A MOTHER

*To a mother with hazel eyes and brownish hair,  
And fingers quick as stars  
That twinkle in night-cold air . . . .  
Hair wound like a web of lacy sea-weed . . . .  
Blue robes floating like the spring wind . . . .  
My mother has a heart that loves me  
And sings like a music.*



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. **SHOES OF THE WIND**





## LOCUST TREE IN BLOOM

**A** BOUGH of locust blossoms for my present,  
Or just a spray is enough for me!  
*They smell like honeysuckle and poppies*  
*Twined together . . .*  
*Their buds hang like green fruit . . .*  
*They are shoes of the wind.*

## POEMS

**I** KNOW how poems come;  
They have wings.  
When you are not thinking of it  
I suddenly say  
"Mother, a poem!"  
Somehow I hear it  
Rustling.

Poems come like boats  
With sails for wings;  
Crossing the sky swiftly  
They slip under tall bridges  
Of cloud.

## LILACS

**A**FTER lilacs come out  
The air loves to flow about them  
The way water in wood-streams  
Flows and loves and wanders.  
I think the wind has a sadness  
Lifting other leaves, other sprays. . . .  
I think the wind is a little selfish  
About lilacs when they flower.

THROUGH THE RAINBOW

**T**HROUGH the rainbow I saw blue hills.  
Songs love that country.

## SPRING TALK

**T**WO cherry trees are showing white  
And the plum tree is in bloom.  
Apple blossoms are opening . . .  
Come to the crab-apple tree!  
Come see the red buds peeping out!  
When I shut my eyes  
I see violet plants drawn on my eye-lids  
From picking violets all day long;  
And there were just as many  
After I went away.  
For every violet I picked  
Two more sprang up . . . put on their purple  
or white . . .  
When I did not see them  
As quietly as Bumble-Bee  
Decorates himself with pollen  
Whenever I'm not looking.  
You'd better look at my last-year's garden!  
All my golden-glow is flourishing,  
My trillium has a big huge bud . . .  
It is warbler-time, blossom-time,  
Past pussy-willow-time, time for willow leaves,  
With ferns uncurling, bloodroot petals scattered,  
Wild honeysuckle turning red  
Among the rocks. . . .

## JUNE DAY

**I**'VE had a good time today, Mother!  
I feel happy as a starling on a cherry-bough.  
    Young plants coming . . .  
    Apples swelling . . .  
(But the biggest of the feelings I know  
Will always be cherries ripening in the light!)  
The song of the catbird touched my heart.  
I swang in the breeze with my thoughts floating  
    around me. . . .  
    Thoughts of little robins  
    Trying to eat cherries,  
    Thoughts of baby grackles in their nests  
    At sunset-time,  
These were in the shade, these were soft-colored  
    thoughts  
Under the apple-tree as I swang. . . .

## MARIGOLD

**M**ARIGOLD, marigold,  
Where are you going?  
Have you a plan? Can you not tell me?  
I should like to know!  
There are lots of places to wander,  
There is a brook needing a visitor,  
A robin needing a friend.  
You must not be lonely:  
You belong to nature as I do!  
You have a frank little way of staring . . .  
I am curious about you!  
The blue sky hangs over you and me . . .  
The sun's rays fall on us both . . .  
Why not be happy  
On this wonderful earth?  
Marigold, answer!  
I tell you all my thoughts  
But you have not said a word!  
*(It was then she said softly*  
"I have many friends,  
But you are my best!"



## DROWSY ISLAND

**I** KNOW where a crested island  
Bows his head to a wave that is full of  
stars . . .  
Lays his cheek against the foam of that wave.  
It is where the sea is dark  
Against the edge of the world.  
It is farther than ships go.  
When I am sleepy  
I see trees move all shadowy . . .  
Strange fan-curved shapes moving slowly . . .  
There are no trees like those  
In this valley!  
It is so far away,  
Surely I do not hear them rustling,  
But what is the sound in my mind?  
Waves can make it, murmuring up a beach . . .  
Leaves can whisper that way  
At night. . . .

## EDGE OF MORNING

**G**RAY slate roof of a house near by  
Turned silvery by the sun . . .  
Clouds keeping their grayish night-  
pink . . .

Then suddenly

Sunlight poured through the windows;

Sunlight sang as it came;

Clouds dashed by singing;

The blue sky coming opened its eyes to  
the sun.

This is a picture-poem

But it is my thoughts, too!

## GOLDEN WAVE

**T**HE golden wave of sunset  
Stays long . . . does not  
flow away . . .

Red-rose color and pearl  
Above the amber twilight,  
Gleaming like dew  
On the leaves of the forest:  
As though a great pitcher  
Were pouring out light  
I see the golden wave  
Cover the world.

**"I WON'T TELL YOU THE NAME  
OF THIS ONE!"**

**S**OFTLY, softly,  
Gently, gently,  
Over the tree-tops to the sky,  
Back again to the hills,  
Footsteps lost, footsteps unseen,  
Always vanishing. . . .

Softly, softly,  
Gently, gently,  
Don't you make a noise now!  
This wonder-creature comes  
But once a year . . .  
Comes on tiptoe  
Looking under leaves . . .  
Softy, softly,  
Gently, gently . . .

*(Was it the wind?)*

## DYING RIVER

**T**HE river waits for water  
From a feeding stream;  
The little stream, winding,  
Runs on its way to pour itself  
Into the dying river,  
And the river lives again  
In the valley.

## DREAMING OF DREAMS

**D**REAMING of dreams long ago  
On a rain-cloudy day,  
I felt your soft hands like roses,  
And your eyes looking down on me.  
Your lips were near  
Curled at the corners like flower-petals.  
I think of your dark yellow hair  
Lifted by the wind . . .  
I can see it in my mind:  
It makes me wonder.  
How did I find you in my dreams?  
Where is the dream now?

*Where?*

*Your dream is flying over mountains  
Down the valleys,  
Over the rivers of autumn colors  
Into the sky  
And away!*

## THE KEY TO MY MIND

**A** LITTLE stone door in my mind  
Opens and shuts with a musical sound.  
There is a gold key  
Locks the door;  
The door is carved like lace.  
Spirits fly in and out,  
Messages  
Of love and things I ought to know.  
Through the lace-work of stone  
Comes a sweet melody saying  
*Happiness . . . purity . . . strangeness . . .*

## EXILED PRIMROSES

**T**WO exiled primroses  
Stood by a breaking wave.  
Their mother was calling,  
They could not hear.  
They used to live beside a pine tree  
In the garden of a rich merchant  
Of a Chinese city  
That had a name like music of gongs  
Struck softly after dark.



## WESTERN HORIZON

**O**N the sands of the western sea  
Are pink shells . . . bits of coral . . .  
One lonesome shell  
Holds my mind upon it.  
Where the horizon bends  
Ships pass:  
I am that little shell  
Watching them turn and go.  
I hear waves break and fall away . . .  
They are echoes in my heart.  
They are stories I heard  
Yesterday . . .  
Often I try to remember to tell you  
The words of their loveliness.

## MOSS

**G**REEN velvet to look upon,  
Shaped and woven of tiny trees,  
Soft velvet to make a pillow for birds  
Or flowers when they go to sleep,  
Velvet rugs for the footsteps of the wind  
(Though he leaves no footprints behind him,)  
I too have felt that softness:  
I have heard the wind pass and return  
And stoop down to whisper  
Among the trees of the moss-forest.

## ARBUTUS-ING

**Y**OU hunt here and there,  
You know not where,  
And pull away the moss;  
You think you won't find any . . .  
But then!  
A clump of pink and white . . . all  
wonderful!  
Now you think they are gone,  
Now you almost step on the flowers  
They are so near!  
Small, clustered, a sweet breath . . .  
Not a perfume,  
Only a dark deep sweetness  
Of arbutus. . . .

## CLOUDY PANSY

**W**ANDERING down a dusty road  
I met a gypsy.  
She might have dropped out of the trees.  
She had a green kerchief  
And a blue velvet skirt,  
A lavender cape  
And a gold locket:  
Green shoes on the feet  
That trod the powdery road  
To the marble-floored Vermont river  
Thinking . . . as it goes along . . .

## ORCHID LADY

**T**AN and green orchid,  
Are you a little lady  
Holding up your skirts  
Above wet grass?  
Do you wear a feather  
Where that white is showing?  
Is there any color  
Shut inside your heart?  
I could be an orchid,  
I could be a lady,  
I could wear a feather,  
I could step like you;  
There is just the difference  
Of your way of bowing,  
And your tilted bonnet  
And your satin shoe!

## POPPY'S SLEEPY SHELL

**P**OLLEN of poppies . . . a powder  
the fairies use  
Out of the poppy shell of golden royal  
blue,  
When they are going to dance and dance  
In ring-about's of mushrooms at night  
Till poppies put them to sleep at last  
With bedtime chimes and secret breath!

## ROSE THISTLE

**A** BROOK to run past it,  
A cloud to float over it,  
An eagle with its children  
To talk to it,  
The thistle on the hillside  
Is pink with dew  
And rainbow cloud.  
Two bees dig out honey as hard  
as they can  
Before the shower:  
The humming bird eats honey too,  
And later he will want thistle-down  
for his nest  
When the rose-color has gone  
And the flower is changed.

## AUTUMN BLUE MIST

**T**HIS is night's own trailing wind  
That goes by in blue mist  
When morning wakes.  
This is not smoke from chimneys,  
No fire breathes and puffs it out  
Across the sun.  
This is autumn on an October morning . . .  
Early hills,  
Fields in a veil.



## MOON IN OCTOBER

**T**HE moon is at her crystal window  
Spinning and weaving . . .  
The moon looks out of her window of crystal.  
She has no lights excepting stars  
That hang on threads unknown  
From her sky-ceiling, her walls.  
Their twinkling is like the twittering of  
many birds  
In the early morning.  
The moon sits by her crystal window;  
She sings to herself and spins . . .  
Spins the pale blue silken thread  
That holds earth dangling  
Over deep light. . . .

*(Now this is what the moon sings:)*

Spin, spinning wheel,  
Day and night too!  
I keep it going all the time  
To weave my robe of dew.  
I make it from the fields of blue

## MOON IN OCTOBER

And the robin's breast;  
The sun gives me rays  
From the yellow west.  
It shall be touched with evening  
And with mellow dew,  
And send a separate shining  
Down the sky to you,  
My woven gown of sun-rays,  
My silken gown of blue.

## NINE

**D**O you know how nine comes?  
The fairies have numbers, all my ages,  
Sharp on a piece of card-board:  
They cut out and spirit out my number,  
*Nine* . . .  
They come to the window softly . . .  
Then they give it life . . . open the window.  
It flies in, it bumps me on the forehead,  
But does not wake me:  
Just before morning breaks it fades back  
    into my brain  
And is my age.

## WISHES

**I** WANT three things;  
They are wishes  
Bright and happy.  
You cannot know my dreams,  
The wishes that stay in my heart . . .  
I want three things  
Unknown to any one!

*Tell me—oh, tell me  
What are the wishes  
In your heart?*

I cannot tell you;  
It is a secret thing.

## MARY COBWEB

**S**HE was not exactly a doll . . .  
I always saw her taller,  
And she liked flowery dresses  
And gloves of violet petals.  
Yet she was cozy and heartsome,  
She could cook mushrooms  
And knew how to season a roast.  
Quite practical!  
I called her Mary Cobweb  
Because I knew one day that must be  
her name,  
Though nobody told me:  
And the secret fairy ways she had  
Kept me interested in spite of my  
growing . . .  
(Though now I have lost her!)  
I know she liked cream . . .  
I know she could not leave a honeycomb  
Unbroken . . .  
Somehow she was real  
Through my own feelings. . . .

## TO A BLACK PANSY

**L**ITTLE Prince,  
Why do you stray about  
Like a firefly who has lost  
his lantern?  
Why do you sob,  
Small gypsy in the dark?  
Do you think maybe the world  
Will end tonight?

## BARE BUTTER-NUT TREE

**A** TREE stands old and worn;  
The North has blown away  
its leaves.

When I see it that way  
I wish Spring would return . . .  
How can I wait so long?

O butter-nut tree,  
Why didn't God give you speech,  
And you without your green leaves?  
Why can't you sing small songs  
Against the wind  
For comfort?

## LEAVES

**I**N my apple-orchard  
In the oldest tree  
Fall has hidden gold leaves.  
I looked into the hollow  
And saw no apples,  
Only leaves with frost on them  
Like marble tilings,  
Like jeweled tables . . .  
Yet there was no gold . . . no  
marble . . .  
Only leaves covered with frost  
That sparkled the way my thought  
told me.



## MY MIND AND I

**W**E are friends,  
My mind and I,  
Yet sometimes we cannot  
understand each other;  
As though a cloud had gone  
over the sun,  
Or the pool all blind with  
trees  
Had forgotten the sky.

## RIVER

**S**OMETHING wanders among the mountains,  
Something ripples along forget-me-not fields,  
Something cries when birds go south,  
Something curves its golden sand-bar  
Like the handle of a purple sword.  
If I speak strangely  
Do not wonder:  
Something is looking for a castle  
Made of seaweed, shells and coral,  
Where the sea curls  
Under the sunrise.

## EVENING RIVER

**T**HERE'S a cloud in the west  
Shuts the big red globe from my  
eyes.

Two little clouds  
Are sundown birds sailing past in pink  
light:

Stars on dwindling threads hang  
trembling:

Birds come and have soft talkings  
together . . .

Company sometimes, maybe?

But now I am leaving in blank thought  
that river

Murmuring its poem about the sun,  
About the sand and glittering stones . . .

Oh pure white sand!

Now I turn away to strange moments  
And places . . .

Now the evening curls and closes. . . .

## WET DAY

**R**AIN-DROPS slanted down,  
Light struck through them sharply . . .  
The sun burst through . . .  
It was like a thunder cloud  
But golden.  
Everybody was shut into houses  
On this favorite street of mine:  
Even I had been shut in.  
But when I saw the rain-drops parted,  
I stood free:  
The sun-god swept his wind over us.  
He flung glory into our feeling of clear  
relief . . .  
People of the town  
Tired of rain.

## OLD PEOPLE SINGING

**I** LOVE to listen to old people singing.  
I love the way they have of humming to themselves.  
It makes me think of the sun of past days  
That is the present . . . when it shines again . . .  
It makes me think of lonely trees  
Strayed away from their forest . . .  
It is like a thick soft curtain hiding the view from me  
Of a country I have never seen.

## JAPANESE PICTURE

**T** REES on a marble island,  
Birds with little brown backs . . .  
*Is this Paradise?*  
Mountain of my heart  
With pink and purple coloring,  
Little houses on the river-bank . . .  
Houses made of maple-sugar,  
Distant tree,  
Boats with blue sails;  
Japanese people in silk  
Hidden in the brown-sugar houses;  
Yellow sky, pearl-colored ground,  
River-ripples like the ripples in silk  
Or a windy corn-field;  
Hills of pink opal  
And dewy seas. . . .  
*Did you answer my question  
About Paradise?*

## THIS IS A DREAM

**R** OSES in my garden,  
Brooks that run far,  
Clouds that go a-hunting,  
Red copper fountain-bowls . . .  
*This is all my dream*  
*I am telling you . . .*  
Candlesticks, palaces,  
Leaves that turn to gold,  
Marble shapes that stand,  
Trees that turn to silver,  
Leaves of glass,  
*(Roses in my garden,*  
*Brooks that run far . . .)*  
Oh my dreams will be coming true  
Some day when I do not think  
of it!  
Love is my dream,  
Love is everywhere.  
*(Brooks that run far*  
*Reflect the sky.)*  
Love climbs like a vine  
In my heart;

## THIS IS A DREAM

Like a vine of amethyst  
And pearl.  
*Oh, my dream will come true some  
day,  
Roses in my garden, brooks that  
run far!*



## WOOD DOVE

**W**HEN morn in breaking  
When the sun is rising over  
    dark blue hills,  
When mists go by  
I hear a voice say  
*Coo . . . coo . . .*  
It is Mistress Wood Dove  
Hidden and alone,  
Glad of morning.  
I call,  
She answers:  
Morning is sweeter  
For her voice.

## JASMINE IN SPRING'S HAIR

**J**ASMINE in Spring's hair, braided into  
Spring's hair,  
Dangling stars wound closely,  
Stars fluttering from the braided golden wind,  
Spring mist melting out through trees  
Over peacock-fern. . . .

*All the time mist lifting . . .*

*Mist going away . . . going away . . .*

Jasmine like a Spring moon  
Growing on the blue vine of night . . .  
Jasmine shining in the hair of Spring  
And the scent of jasmine coming into my  
thoughts. . . .

*All the time the mist lifting slowly . . .*

*All the time the thought of Spring on tiptoe  
in my heart. . . .*

## MESSAGE FOR A SICK FRIEND

**T**ELL her my love  
Tell her to go to sleep  
Thinking of everything in the  
world;  
Colors . . . the wind . . .  
Or a fish in a spray of opal  
seaweed. . . .

## AUGUST AFTERNOON

**S**EA-BLUE of gentian,  
Blackberries' ebony stain,  
Yellow of goldenrod,  
Tree fringes wavering along  
    the road  
Under the hill,  
These make up an August  
    afternoon  
I have known:  
But more than fruit or flower or  
    tree  
Is my mother's love I hold  
In my heart.

## CHRYSANTHEMUMS

**D**USKY red chrysanthemums out of Japan,  
With silver-backed petals like armor,  
Tell me what you think sometimes?  
You have fiery pink in you too . . .  
You all mean loveliness:  
You say a word  
Of joy.  
You come from gardens unknown  
Where the sun rises . . .  
You bow your heads to merry little breezes  
That run by like fairies of happiness;  
You love the wind and woody vines  
That outline the forest . . .  
You love brooks and clouds . . .  
Your thoughts are better than my thoughts  
When the moon is getting high!

## BLUEBELL RING

**B**LUEBELLS all in one  
Like a piece of sky,  
Nodding to the faint air  
With still faces,  
Stirring a little,  
Holding their breath for wonder  
But all the time friendly  
To any one who passes. . . .

## NATURE

**S**ITTING in the half-dusk,  
My mother and I talking and gossip-  
ing . . .

(Such gossip! Such talk!)

We tell poems,

We wonder over nature, what she can be about?

It would be strange to ask questions of nature

And *be* nature at the same time!

Nobody knows what secrets she has

Hidden in her bosom white like a shell.

My mother does not know, I don't know,

Nobody knows.

## GOLD FISH

**L**IKE a shot of gold  
Or an arrow darting  
With thin gold wings  
He swims . . .  
Now around . . . then straight . . .  
Then a swish of tail . . .  
Then zigzag all along  
With a kind of stiff smile . . .  
In ponds or bowls  
He swims and stares  
Out of big popping eyes  
Of ebony . . .



## BARBERRY

**I**'M going to have a horse  
Named Barberry,  
His coat the color of barberry leaves  
In autumn:  
Russet red he will be  
With flying mane,  
Strong and wiry,  
His head slender and haughty!  
Touch him . . . feel the life and joy  
    within him  
Run through you like fire!  
He will be free as wind:  
He will take me through forests away  
    from people,  
Past lakes, across rivers, into the moun-  
    tains:  
He will go galloping across corn fields  
    by twilight  
He will find me a coral beach.  
His eyes will snap with joy of always  
    being free.  
*People may give me their best horses . . .  
Barberry for me, against them all!*

## JOY

**J**OY is not a thing you can see.  
It is what you feel when you watch  
    waves breaking,  
Or when you peer through a net of woven  
    violet stems  
In Spring grass.  
It is not sunlight, not moonlight,  
But a separate shining.  
Joy lives behind people's eyes.

## FIELD MOUSE

**L**ITTLE brown field mouse  
Hiding when the plough goes by,  
Timid creature that you are,  
Wild thing,  
Were you once in the forest?  
Did you move to the fields?  
In your brown cloak  
You gather grain  
For your secret meals:  
You will build a house of earth  
The way you remember:  
From a baby up to your fullgrown feeling  
You have run about the field  
As other field-mice will run about  
When another century has come  
Like a cloud. . . .

## MOCCASIN FLOWER

**M**OCCASIN flower," I said,  
"Like a ship full of thoughts  
Floating down a river,  
Thoughts I don't know  
In the little ship's heart. . . .  
Moccasin flower of the woods,  
Wild May orchid,  
Looking out at the weather  
And the moon's rays,  
Who is it you play with?  
Daisy or buttercup?  
It cannot be,  
For you live in the forest,  
They, in the fields.  
Do the robins come to visit you,  
Or bluebirds, maybe?  
Do they bring you cherries  
For your gown?  
I wonder if you know them.  
They are friends of mine.  
Do you know Mrs. Primrose?  
She wears a pink gown . . .

## MOCCASIN FLOWER

You must be friends! ”  
A small voice answered  
“I know her very well,  
But not Robin, Bluebird,  
Buttercup or Daisy!  
I know Fern, Red-Cap Moss, Mushroom,  
I know Wild Canary, Hermit Thrush,  
Brown Veery comes at sunset . . .  
I have often seen him . . .  
I have heard his thoughts  
In tones like apple-blossoms,  
The kind a violin plays. . . .”

Suddenly I noticed dusk  
Coming . . .  
I heard the veery . . .  
I tiptoed away.

## BUTTERFLY ADVENTURE

**I** SAW a butterfly  
Dark-brown and dusty  
Like a plain traveler.  
But when the sun shone on him  
He wore sapphire-blue and opal  
And winking half-moons of gold powder . . .  
All the brown vanished away!

How could I know  
He was iridescent?  
Nature seems to hide  
When you look at her with sleepy eyes,  
But with eyes wide-open in the open light  
You see her shine to all the colors  
Of the sun.

## CARRIER PIGEONS

**A** CROSS the rippled ocean  
Where the wind blows wildly  
And never keeps still,  
Across the midnight sky, a glad news!  
Messages floating, beating,  
Happy words high over the sad sand  
And empty waters . . .  
Pigeons on their way  
Home.

## CHERRY BLOSSOMS

**A**RTIFICIAL, lying on the bough like  
snow-flakes,  
With pinkness touching them sometimes  
As though it were sunset,  
Cool and far-looking  
Yet turning all the time into red ruby cher-  
ries. . . .

I am waiting with the robin redbreast  
For the hour to come!  
They will be green, then daffodil yellow,  
Then their cheeks will redden,  
They will be ruby-dark that now are hidden . . .  
The far will change into near. . . .

*I am watching you every Maytime hour  
You artificial rosebud-snowflake cherry  
blossoms!*



## THE CELLAR

**I** LOVE my queer cellar with its dusty smell,  
Its misty smell like smoke-fringes  
From clouds blowing past;  
With its shelves of jam and goodies,  
With its boxes . . . barrels . . .  
Woodpiles here and there.  
There is a passageway  
To an unknown room  
Where bins hold carrots and things.  
There are glass doors that bang  
And cobweb windows.  
I love the quietness of my cellar  
Thinking in the dark.  
My cellar has apples in its breath,  
Potatoes even,  
That smell of earth.

## PEONY

**S**HELL-PINK it stands in the tall glass,  
Queen Elizabeth in a ruff (or one of her  
ladies?)

Looking the way she did in old English times.  
To see her makes me hear fiddlers playing  
Out-of-doors!

I can never tell which they will be when they come  
out . . .

King or queen or lady of the court . . .  
Country woman or man or little laughing girl  
Dancing through the woods . . .

Very soon that peony over there  
Is going to be Cinderella;  
But this is Queen Elizabeth  
In my mother's vase.

## THE MILKY WAY

**D**OWN the highroad of the Milky Way  
We go riding  
On horses made of stars.  
The clouds flit like white butterflies;  
We are dry . . . we do not know it is raining  
Upon earth.  
Roses of opal and pearl  
Sway back and forth in the musical wind . . .  
Pine trees like emeralds hang . . .  
A pheasant's wing like a fan is spread . . .  
White mountain-peaks gleam . . .  
Purple and silver is the sunrise.  
Quiet lakes shine along the Milky Way  
Like mirrors you hang on cottage walls.  
When I am asleep  
This is what I shall dream.  
Things can never really go,  
They come again and stay.  
When your thoughts are put on beautiful things  
They come alive and stay alive  
In your mind.

## GERANIUM PEOPLE

**C**LOUDS were flying up out of the water.  
Hills were like blue asters against white  
surf.

The wind blew from nowhere, from everywhere.  
It did not know where it was going.  
I saw red geraniums like falling stars,  
Their heads still upright, though sunflowers were  
drooping;  
When frost comes,  
And the bleating hail,  
These geranium people will not be strong  
Any more.

## DAISIES

**S**NOW-WHITE shawls . . .  
Golden faces . . .  
Countryside, hillside, wayside  
people . . .  
Little market-women  
Selling dew and yellow flour  
To make bread  
For some city of elves. . . .

## THE OLD BRASS POT

**T**HE old brass pot in the corner  
Shines and scowls at the kitchen  
pans;  
Like a stubborn king  
He sits and frowns . . .  
Orders them about  
When I'm not looking.  
He was a gift from the fairy queen . . .  
*What can I do?*

He boils rice when I want it,  
Makes broth when it is needed,  
He is magic  
But he growls all day.  
Without him it would be pleasant and  
comfortable  
In my little cottage  
With wistaria growing over the open  
windows . . .  
*What can I do?*

## THE OLD BRASS POT

He tells the frying pan  
To stay on its hook . . .  
He shouts at the other pans  
In a gruff voice . . .  
They all might be so happy  
In my cozy kitchen!  
Tell me . . . but you must whisper . . .  
*What can I do?*

## NIGHT IS FORGOTTEN

**N**IGHT is forgotten.  
Birds sing when the happy sun  
Looks suddenly down.  
I hope the iris is out  
With dew like jewels fringing the  
petals;  
I hope the oriole is up  
Arranging his feathers.  
I must hurry . . . there is so much to  
see . . .  
I can hardly remember it all!  
Only yesterday I made a song about a  
yellowbird  
And what did I say?  
It is not real to me now  
Though I know how he gleamed,  
Shining through four thin leaves  
Of the pear-tree.



ELSA

**M**Y sister stood on a hilltop  
Looking toward the sea.  
The wind was in her bronze-colored  
hair.

She was an image  
On a broken wave . . .  
Foam was at her feet.  
So for a moment she wavered  
And was lovely;  
And I remember her.

## HILL SONG

**A**WAY, away on a winding road,  
Away, away, far and wide to the mountains,  
Through pleasant meadow-plains that smell of  
strawberries

Down a lane of mountain-rue

We go.

All this will fade away,

But here we are on the road to the hills

To the sky where swallows flit

And shove their wings into the mountain-air.

They slash their wings into the brook-water,

Let it flupper over their wings. . . .

*(In the fields, strawberries dark red with  
ripeness,*

*In the brook, trout that wear coral beads.)*

It is the gurgling of brook-water

Makes me want to sing!

This hill-song is over now . . .

Ends suddenly

Like a sapphire. . . .

## APPLE-BLOSSOM TOWN

**I**KNOW an orchard . . .  
Apple-blossom Town!  
Bees live in the next village.  
Pink and fluffy houses in the trees  
Are for rent.  
My thoughts tell me who will come . . .  
These are trees that blossom with bees  
and birds.  
Here is a town with just enough air,  
just enough sun;  
Love enough, happiness enough.

## BED-TIME

**I** *LOOK at the clock of the moon . . .*  
*Time for children to be in bed!*

I have hidden the great sleepy ocean  
Under a leaf:  
I have talked to the mountain softly  
As I would to a thrush:  
The river is stretched out  
In the cornfield,  
But there is still a commotion in the  
lower valley  
Where I tethered the west wind to a  
sycamore tree.

## PIGEONS JUST AWAKE

**A**S the sun rose  
Everything was bathed in gold,  
Trees were still and solemn . . .  
Pigeons waded the dew.  
Their feet were the color of new June  
strawberries.

I thought what it must be to fly,  
To whirl up into the light,  
To know the curved flight of pigeons  
Above trees and lawns!  
If I could fly  
I should not have to leave my mother  
for long  
Nor my dark-eyed sister;  
Only a fluttering, a lifting  
Up round the elm tree and over,  
A cool curving and sliding down the  
light  
Into wet grass.

## LITTLE OLD WOMAN

**B**ENDING down like arms  
The branches of the crab-apple tree  
Make a shining tent  
With doors of glass I can look through  
And green satiny doors  
Each with a lock of gold.  
I sit like a little old woman knitting  
In the Spring warmth . . .  
The spots of sunlight on the grass  
Are golden children singing and dancing;  
My arms are full of golden children,  
Though I do not know what they  
sing . . .  
Little old woman that I am,  
Knitting. . . .

## THIS IS ABOUT MOUNTAINS

**I**T'S maple sugar time  
In the mountains.  
The brook has climbed its bank  
To look over into the world.  
Trees are beginning to think . . .  
They stretch themselves.  
The bareness of the woods will go  
If the pattern of the year is what I  
learned  
Last Spring.

The mountains I knew best  
Used to have festivals . . .  
There was September on Starr King . . .  
I remember the apple-sauce tree,  
I remember how I would smash apples  
on top of a rock  
Crush them with a stone for the calves  
to eat.  
How the chipmunks scolded me for  
taking the apples!  
Chipmunks own the mountains

## THIS IS ABOUT MOUNTAINS

But the mountains haven't heard about  
it yet.

March maple-sugar and September  
apples

And a cave of honey the bees know,

And Hilda to think about them

Afterward. . . .



## HORSE-CHESTNUT COTTAGE

**W**ITHIN a green and everlasting  
covering

Like a coat of mail

There lives a little old lady

In an apartment of several rooms.

The walls are pink on one side,

Brown on the other;

She must be a rich old lady to have  
wall-coverings

Of changeable silk finer than spiders'  
webs!

Once she got lost.

I saw her shiny shriveled face

Look up at me

From the grass.

I heard her call and call me

In a faint and shivering voice

To come to her quickly,

Unlock the door for her,

Help her up the steps

Into the place she had always known

Since she began at all. . . .

## MAGNOLIA

**O**H shell-pink that you wear,  
Oh pure white bosom!  
Like a fan all spread,  
Like a sail ready to go over lapping  
    seas,  
Sometimes birds flutter in your branches,  
But you have not many friends.  
Your friends are flowers,  
Your comrades are trees,  
But birds seem shy of you,  
And the little insects.  
I know not what your thoughts may be  
When the wind blows your flower-buds  
Single or in clusters,  
Oh beautiful magnolia  
Up against the gray stern sky!  
Your color lightens the grayness  
And purples the rain.

## HERMIT THRUSH

**S**OMETHING that cannot be said  
in words . . .  
Something sweet and unknown . . .  
The wind . . . the brook . . .  
Something that comes to a trembling  
fuller tone  
Like a waterfall . . .  
That little brown creature is singing  
A music of water, a music of worlds;  
He will fly away south,  
But his song stays in the heart  
Once it is heard.

## FLITTING WAVE

**T**HREE words I combine  
Mix them like a wine  
For the sea to drink:  
*Happy . . . merry . . . gleeful . . .*  
These are three words  
That sparkle!  
The wind sings with foam.  
I, with my thoughts.

## THE SEA IS GRAY

**T**HE sea is gray with a gold rim of  
moonlight:  
Foam is the lace binding the golden rim.  
Only a little while ago  
The sea was an opal box.

I have buried my thoughts in the sand:  
It would take a water-creature to find them.  
I could not find them myself with much  
searching  
Unless a shell should remember for me,  
Or a sand-cricket mark a pebble-mound . . .  
*"Here you hid something!"*

Once I cared for many things  
I have forgotten.  
When the sea moves slowly  
Nothing matters except the moon.

## MOTH

**B**Y the river of Now-a-days  
When you bend close to see the million  
    tiny flowers  
That crowd to make one bloom of the  
    Queen's Lace,  
If you happen to disturb my secret dream,  
I shall come flitting like a small moth  
Into your mind.

## HONEY

**T**HERE'S a busy hum in the farm meadow  
As the bees go from daisy to clover-top  
Humming, humming as the horizon clouds blow  
nearer,  
Humming, humming on this gay June morning.  
Even the vineyards are in bloom:  
The grape-flower breath comes on the breeze  
Something like breath of primroses that bloom  
in evening light  
And laugh at what goes on in the world.

## DRYAD

**D**ON'T scold willows,  
They are dryad trees!  
If you find a dryad,  
Dolores, my dear,  
She will kiss you, maybe . . .  
Make you young again!



## TODAY I SAW

**T**ODAY I saw the world a new way:  
Close-drawn slanted rain, white light,  
the wind blowing,  
And the sky with a fringe of elm-buds.

Let the rain now fall in torrents  
And the trees shake like flags:  
Today I saw the world a new way.

Let the sand-dunes have their song.  
The Connecticut swept by them proudly  
Fluttering her silver skirts of rain  
So that I thought of all the queens I have  
ever known  
In all the stories.

## THE SONG

**T**HE pine tree was singing a song tonight  
With the wind in its branches,  
But earth-held children were heavy with sleep:  
No one heard the song.

## WILD TULIP

**M**OTTLED like the tiger-lily leaf,  
With black necklace clinging,  
(Of course it has a green cloak!)  
God has made a tulip.  
He made the glacier like a moving jewel,  
He made the tulip  
Like a red cloud lighted by the sun.  
I wonder how it feels to make a flower  
Or a glacier like a great dream!

## LUSTRE CUP

**T**HE rainy blue teacup is my favorite.  
It has a mountain like a white butterfly  
Poised. . . .  
It has a lake with coral reeds.  
I see water-hyacinth growing,  
And I know flamingoes  
Will come flying over.  
A strange voice tells me to go searching . . .  
Tells me I could find something on that shore  
No one else can find.

## VOLCANO

**I**N Mexico a mountain stands alone.  
It looms above me . . . a joy strikes my  
heart;  
I see its transparent colors, its long opal  
hair . . .  
But the moon would make it shine  
A heap of silver.  
My thoughts are gone from me  
Because of that splendid trembling iridescent  
thing . . .  
I know it will fade,  
I know it must go.  
Songs float over its crest . . .  
Dusk is coming on . . .  
*I will touch the mountain!*  
My fingers touch air.  
The broad bright country sways in folds  
Like long slow waves . . .  
If all the hills were water rising and falling  
This would be the highest wave,  
This would be the white-hooded wave,  
This would be the great wave for sea-gulls  
to follow!

## MAY BASKET

**N**OT violets, not lilac,  
But cowslips to remind you of the  
marshes,  
To tell you how the redwing is back  
On pale-feathered willows;  
Cowslips wading in water . . . I found  
them wading  
Up to their little green knees. . . .

## SUNBEAMS

**S**UNBEAMS sing little folk-songs  
About fairies, about Neptune  
And those old gods . . .  
Sunbeams remember the world being  
made:  
Grasses and small things  
Remind them.  
I have heard them speaking another  
language  
As though the sun-god heard,  
But I can understand better their oriole-  
talk  
And their songs of delight  
After rain.

## SHADOWS

**C**IRCLES transparent, black as night,  
Circles with gold spokes of sun-rays,  
Transparent as sun that shines,  
Transparent as moon that beams,  
Clear shadows whirl and flit.  
As I think of it  
Transparent is the whole spinning world.



## DRAGON BOX

**C**ARVED and twisted and silver  
in its shadows  
Is the dragon box my mother gave me:  
Secret even from my sister  
And friends dear to me.  
I hide my treasure under the dragon  
Curling on the cover.

Now it is a butterfly  
On the blue velvet . . .  
But sometimes it is my thoughts.  
The butterfly is made of yellow opal.  
With black jet like two eyes  
His wings are set,  
And a dim black circle  
Like a trail of strange thoughts.  
I have told you about the butterfly . . .  
I have not told you what I am thinking.  
That is a dragon-box secret  
Only Mother and I know.

## BULBS

**B**ULBS in brown capes  
As though they were dead . . .  
As though they would never come alive!

But their life is real  
Though you cannot see it:  
White ribbons reach from them far and  
wide

Into mysterious water:  
When you have given up all hope . . .  
(How can you know their narcissus  
thoughts?)

They soften and rouse  
And poke out green finger-tips.

## THREE HYACINTHS

**T**HREE hyacinths grow gaily  
In the blue Chinese jar:  
My mother, my sister and I!  
We are curly-fingered,  
We wear pointed caps:  
We play ring-around-a-rosy all day long:  
We look at winter through a silver  
    window  
Glad we are not made of frost,  
For hyacinths on window-panes  
Fade and vanish . . .  
They cannot look back at the sun  
Laughing softly;  
They cannot whisper together, I suppose,  
As garden hyacinths do,  
Or as my mother, my sister and I whisper  
    and play  
Living in the blue jar.

## SNOW MORNING

**M**ORNING is a picture again  
With snow-puffed branches  
Out of the wind . . .  
With the sky caught like a blue  
feather  
In the butternut tree.  
I cannot see the world behind the  
snow,  
But when I look into my mind  
There with all its people and colors  
The world sits smiling  
Quite warm and cozy.

## GOLD-FISH BOWL

**T**HROUGH the gold-fish bowl  
I look into tropical islands.  
The great bowl of water makes things  
bigger than they are . . .  
Stranger.  
That is why one spray behind the glass  
Keeps me dreaming of a palm tree;  
And our reflected windows  
Are a water-place.  
The fish swim into one window . . .  
Out of another . . .  
Winding their gentle way  
With no sound.  
The bowl reflects and sings with color  
And with my thoughts.  
My mind whirrs and spins round  
Thinking of things I'll see when I'm  
grown,  
Thinking of what is in the world beyond  
Waiting for me,  
While I stare and stare into the gleamy  
bowl  
Where gold and silver fish twinkle by  
Weaving their web of shining trails. . . .

## LOVELINESS

**L** OVELINESS that dies when I forget  
Comes alive when I remember.

## A MEMORY

**I** PICKED up three folded tulip petals  
That fell from a flower-head;  
Pink and white they were, rolled a little  
At the edges . . .  
When suddenly they smelled like pea-pods  
Fresh and small,  
And I remembered the Champlain garden . . .  
How we shelled peas out-of-doors  
And I ate the pods sometimes,  
They were so sweet!  
The whole tulip will not smell that way,  
Only a few curly petals  
Fallen,  
If they are not withered and their own  
breath  
Is about them.

## WRECK

**S**UNFISH like doves in the sea-trees . . .  
And down below, a wreck  
On the floor of sand.

*That ship was a radiant ship  
Sailing the going waters  
To a sea far . . . far . . .  
Those waves that dash against the rocks,  
They are the same waters  
That took the ship in their arms . . .*



## WHAT I SAID

**L**ILIES of the valley,  
Bell-shaped moments clustered,  
Doves of time, little white doves  
Through the dusky sunset-colored air  
Set free,  
I stroke your wings,  
I stroke your folded wings.

## ORION

**I** SAW Orion glitter  
Through the dark-boughed elm-tree;  
And though I am little, though I could not  
    know or imagine  
How he came there,  
I knew how beautiful he was.

## BLUE JAY

**A**LL the flowers are sleeping,  
A feather blanket of snow  
Over them.  
Blue Jay balances on a dry old sun-  
flower's bent head . . .  
He dives under . . .  
He strikes out seeds with angry  
beak.  
His wings are barred with frost,  
His snow-dusty feet  
Are like dull crystal.  
I like him . . . almost . . .  
But must he keep on screeching in  
such a voice  
And the flowers at their wits' end  
For a little quiet?

## APRIL IS COMING

**A**PRIL is coming with wings of mist and scent  
of lilac . . .

April is trailing her arbutus and her ground pine  
over hill-slopes . . .

April is making us new things to look at . . .

Red-ruffled maples and pussy-willows turned  
powdery,

You may see them through her transparent wind.

## UP AND DOWN

**M**OUNTAINS reach up skyward;  
Boulders reach into the earth.  
Mountains are great and strong, are royal  
when you look at them:  
Boulders have their minds on the center of  
the earth  
They came from.

## MOONBEAM

**M**OONBEAM steps down the  
silken ladder  
Woven by Mrs. Spider  
To ask her to spin him a net  
To catch the stars.

## THE LAKE

**T**HE lake is solemn;  
Its smiles are gone.  
No swan, no birds  
To get relief from burdens and dust.  
Let me go make it glitter,  
Make its flowers sing and blow  
Into a little tune like a wind blowing  
Or a poem Keats thought of . . .

## CHINESE SILK

**O**VER the sea a wandership,  
Over the sea a ship with sails of silk  
Above the marble-white decks.  
Silk with dragons of green,  
Purple mountains,  
Silk like a garden of colored gold and silver  
With dolphins playing in a square pond;  
Silk like a proud park  
With a bold-plumaged peacock in a tree . . .  
Rainbow and amethyst and gold.  
I see fish with twinkling fins . . .  
I see stars in water . . .  
I see winter frost  
Fringed with sunrise and sunset . . .  
Maybe I see more than this  
Tall sails full of pictures!  
Silk from far-away China  
With pictures coming alive  
In the wind!



## SONG FOR MORNING

**F**REE to the wind like a swallow,  
Free to the wind like a bird,  
Over clouds, over fields flying always,  
Never resting from the blue air,  
Over brooks curled like ringlets,  
Over apple-trees in flower,  
That is where I would be;  
Free to the wind, free!

## WEAVING LAUREL DANCE

**T**HERE'S a path that leads  
Through two squares of laurel  
Where I dance like a nymph  
In the April light.  
I go through . . . out on the other  
side . . .  
Back again . . . winding . . .  
Twice again I weave my dance  
And wander away among the trees.  
I shall go back to dance again  
When the laurel blossoms come,  
When the May sun tinkles  
Through the deep pines.  
Stately the pines will wave over me  
While I am in my weaving laurel  
dance. . . .

## LILAC BUSH

**L**ILAC princess  
Swaying in a lavender gown,  
She looks at no one  
But straight into the eyes  
Of sky and wind.  
She may be sad when the rain comes,  
She may be glad when it goes,  
Always she has a smile  
To give the world.  
The sun beams on her,  
Gives his glittering rays,  
Helps her to remember  
When she was in bud.  
In clusters . . . a lavender torch . . .  
She trembles . . . is alive . . .  
Swaying in the lovely light  
Of evening.

## THE WAVE

**O**H if I were a wave  
With sea-green hair and white  
foam-dress,  
Oh if I were a wave  
With foam-white hair and sea-blue  
cloak,  
I would go seeking oceans  
No man has discovered,  
I would go on . . . night or day the  
same searching . . .  
Always singing to myself.  
Somewhere golden sands,  
Somewhere a beach of palms,  
And the wind in them . . .  
Ships to lift and swing like children . . .  
Deep-sea things to handle  
With my strong fingers of water,  
Never a wish to be quiet  
Very long . . .  
Oh if I were a wave  
With thoughts of seaweed  
And dreams of sand and shells!

## MUSIC

**I**F I think music,  
It comes and goes.  
If the fountain ripples and splashes,  
It keeps on singing.  
Falling broken water  
Sings and answers  
When the warblers in the May trees  
Stay close for a little.  
But music that I hear  
Is different in its meanings . . .  
Happy hour or sorrowing  
Into change.

## IRIS

**W**HITER than snow, sharp  
whiteness,  
With fanning leaves, small and  
straight  
Like herself,  
With head to the sky  
And violet eyes wide-open,  
Iris comes murmuring a song  
As trees do,  
And leans upon the wind.  
Later she droops her head,  
For the dark  
Has caught her . . .

## THOUGHTS

**A** LONG a cloudy river  
Comes the note of the evening dove  
Like a mellow light  
That glimmers and is gone.  
I shall remember my twinkling thoughts  
That shine and are lost in the river.  
Sitting on a mossy bank beside an oak tree  
I see and hear and think . . .  
All the great things of the world  
Go by.  
Even at six o'clock in the morning or earlier  
There is the sunrise to think about.

## WHEN MOONLIGHT FALLS

**W**HEN moonlight falls on the water  
It is like fingers touching the chords  
of a harp

On a misty day.

When moonlight strikes the water

I cannot get it into my poem:

I only hear the tinkle of ripples of light.

When I see the water's fingers and the moon's  
rays

Intertwined,

I think of all the words I love to hear,

And try to find words white enough

For such shining. . . .



## LITTLE GREEN BERMUDA POEM

**G**REEN water of waves  
On the Bermuda beaches:  
White coral roads running away,  
Pinks shells waiting for me to come:  
*I shall come some day!*  
How would it sound to be there alone  
And hear the Atlantic Ocean  
Crash on bright rocks?  
This island is a great rainbow  
That lasts forever.  
People go and come  
And the waves forget them.  
I see the island turn and turn  
A soap-bubble with rainbows drifting  
down,  
A rainbow ball turning. . . .  
Always light . . . always glitter looking  
through . . .  
My poem that began with a green wave  
Has broken into colors.

## THUNDER MIST

**W**HIRLING vapor changing. . . .  
*Is it an opening flower?*  
*Is it a fading prancing horse?*  
The steeple with its oldness,  
In the foreground a maple with silver-  
backed leaves  
Against a violet cloud . . .  
This is an August storm  
That blew down out of the sky.

## BROOK

**A** RIPPLING sound, a magical  
sound, a musical sound  
All in one,  
The brook goes swirling, whirling,  
Singing, dancing.  
It likes to curl, and it curls:  
It likes to whirl, and it whirls.  
It comes to a long straight lane  
And goes straight as arrows go.  
Violets are the color of water  
Under one kind of sky,  
But water is always changing;  
Going by.  
This is a quaint song  
You will not remember any more  
After you have once heard it.  
You cannot remember the sound of  
water  
Nor the musical rippling of my  
words.

## THE GARDEN

**L**OVE is a garden  
Where my soul is a tree in bloom,  
Where my joy is a fountain that keeps  
    rippling  
Forevermore.

## HYACINTH

**H**YACINTH, hyacinth,  
Is it Spring now?  
For I am weary of the long long  
winter  
Green grass ought to come when  
Spring opens her eyes,  
Hyacinth, will you tell me  
When Spring will be here?  
The lilac-bushes are in bud  
Under their snow.  
I cannot see the buds  
And no one tells me but you  
Of the world coming alive  
In the sun!

## BUTTERFLY IN A WIND

**A**LL of a sudden  
Blown to my hand  
Wings of dewy color,  
Silvery flaky dust along my finger. . . .  
I wondered where he had come  
from?  
I asked him where he was going?

Butterfly words are faint  
But I heard his answer . . .  
*I never know!*  
*I am a wanderer in the wind.*

## I KEEP WONDERING

**I** SAW a mountain  
And he was like Wotan looking at him-  
self in the water.

I saw a cockatoo  
And he was like sunset clouds.  
Even leaves and little stones  
Are different to my eyes sometimes.  
I keep wondering through and through my  
heart

Where all the beautiful things in the world  
Come from?  
And while I wonder  
They go on being beautiful.

## ABOUT ANIMALS

**A**NIMALS are my friends and my kin  
and my playfellows;  
They love me as I love them.  
I have a feeling for them I cannot express . . .  
It burns in my heart.  
I make thoughts about them to keep in my  
mind.  
I warm the cold, help the hurt, play with  
the frolicsome;  
I laugh to see two puppies playing  
And I wonder which is which!  
*General* is a dog with blue-black eyes;  
They shine . . . there is a love comes from  
them;  
He is filled with joy when he guards me;  
His eyes try to speak.  
I see his mind through them  
When he asks me to say things for him as  
well as I can  
Because he has no words.



## GOLDEN PEAR TREE

**O**UT beyond the hills  
In a meadow there stands a pear tree  
Like the sun.  
It is a singing tree . . .  
Its song is of the wind, of birds, of myself.  
In winter time it is changed to a silver shape  
of snow;  
But before that time it has borne its pears  
Of amber and gold.

## VERMONT HILLS

**T**HE Vermont hills curve  
Like a swirl of wind;  
The last light shines . . .  
They are like plums and grapes.  
They have lights like coral,  
Like April peach-trees in the dark.  
I shall dream them again  
When years have gone,  
And I shall not have forgotten  
You.

## EAGLE ON THE MOUNTAIN CREST

**H**IS bronze shone like a haze:  
From below you would think him  
an image

Of long ago.

But he is real . . . he is of now-a-days:

No one made him but God.

## I WONDERED AND WONDERED

**I** WONDERED and wondered . . .  
I saw a comrade of mine;  
It was a wave smooth and blue  
That tossed . . . fell away . . .  
I wondered and wondered . . .  
I saw a mountain white with old age;  
I could not remember  
How I came there.  
I wondered and wondered  
Under a motherly sky  
That knew my name and kind,  
That rested my tired thoughts,  
That said "*I have a rainbow for you,*  
*Hilda,*  
*And a young moon, hidden. . . .*"

## MARCH SUNSET

**P**INES cut dark on a bronze sky . . .  
A juniper tree laughing to the harp  
of the wind . . .  
Last year's oak leaves rustling . . .  
And oh, the sky like a heart of fire  
Burned down to those coals that have the  
color of fruit . . .  
Cherries . . . light red grapes . . .

## MERMAID

**D**O not grieve,  
Do not be unhappy,  
Do not look about  
As though you saw nothing!

Soon the black, the dark green ocean  
Will come back . . .  
Will clash against the rocks  
On the sliding sand . . .

Soon the sun will come from the eastern  
horizon  
Up from great blue hills  
To change the water to glittering heaps  
Of pearls. . . .

*Then you will remember!*

## COZY SONG

**C**OZY we sit  
A cricket and I,  
In a little tree-trunk corner  
Soft with leaves of falling snow.  
Friends are we.  
For once he is not thinking  
About music or moonlight.  
We talk of a cottage somewhere  
With a canary in the window  
And chairs leaning together  
Like old people talking;  
It looks warm-hearted  
To our dreams.

## DREAMS

**D**REAMING of lands far away  
I lie on a smooth white cloud  
Drifting along the wind  
Lazy and slow-pouring above the trees.  
They bend . . . a quiet rush . . . a  
hush . . .  
A murmuring . . . a rustle and swerve  
of leaves . . .  
They are dreaming other dreams  
Because they are old.  
I do not know how it is  
Dreams come to the old.  
New worlds beginning when the old life  
ends,  
Changing summers and autumns  
With kind faces,  
Spring-times that run away smiling . . .  
Old people and old trees dreaming  
Make we wonder.  
There is not very much in my own dream  
today



## DREAMS

Excepting thoughts that blossom in  
summer.

Whatever I tell you, O my mother,  
You know I am only a little girl  
Wondering. . . .

## COPPER BOWL

**W**HEN clouds sit in the sky  
The earth must look to them  
like a copper bowl  
With the sun on it.  
I hope they see the green elm-buds float-  
ing in that bowl,  
And color like a lavender scarf  
That is the April wind!

## PINE CONE

**P**INE CONE is a brown girl  
From Kentucky.  
By a gleaming lake she stands  
Like a lady in front of a mirror  
Admiring her dress.  
I often see her brown curls ruffled  
out . . .  
I see her dimples . . .  
I hear the grass and the dew play  
music to her . . .  
But what made me think of her  
today  
I'll never know.

.

## WINTER NIGHT

**T**HE snow lies fluffed . . .  
Untrampled.

The trees gossip when the moon  
gets up.

The music that is in the snow-  
dream

Stays with me,  
Mother!

## SONG NETS

**I** WEAVE them of sun and moonbeams;  
I run back and forth making my nets.  
The seagulls scream . . .  
Tell me where to catch the songs;  
I have a magic in my own mind  
That tells me.

*Song nets,  
I weave you with all my love  
You glitter like pearls and rubies . . .  
In you I catch songs like butterflies.  
You go past my reaching hand  
With a thin gauzy floating . . .  
And the songs are caught  
Before they fade away.  
Last night my hand caught a song  
Of pines and quiet rivers:  
I shall keep it forever.*

## I LIVE IN A COTTAGE

**T**HERE'S a little cottage  
in a ring of hedge.  
Hyacinths grow  
At the garden edge.  
There's poplar and lilac  
And an apple tree. . . .  
*And there I am in my little red  
dress and sunbonnet with the  
watering-pot in my hand . . .*  
Have you come to visit me?

## BLUE AND GOLD

**B**LUE of sapphire,  
Gold of sunset,  
In the lake they sometimes glitter,  
In the sky they are often found.  
Colors of sky and sun  
Intertwined.  
When the swans arrange their plumage  
The blue and gold are like arms around them  
Holding them close to the world.  
Old as it may seem,  
Tiresome as it gets to be to a young mind,  
These two wonders, gold of the sun . . .  
Blue of the sky and night . . .  
Have to be thought about.

## ROYAL PALMS

**T**HERE are thoughts in the earth  
That grow to be palm trees.  
Don't you hear the wind singing and moaning  
Through their fanning leaves?



## BLUEBIRD

**S**O happy the song he sings  
On the apple-blossom bough!  
Remembering how the sun  
Melted the long winter snow.  
He is the first to come,  
He and his comrade robin,  
In his heart joyful  
Over returning Spring.  
So happy the song he sings  
On the apple-blossom bough!

## WHO?

**I**TALIAN anemones in rose-mellowed  
purple  
Are a window of color.  
Who is looking through?

## TREES

**T**HE clouds kiss the leafy breasts  
Of the trees.  
They tell me tales. . . they talk to me.  
I will listen attentively to the tales they tell  
I will imagine their thoughts,  
Their love for the earth they live on:  
I think of a tree poised  
Above a pool of flowers. . . .  
This is more to me than legend.

## LULLABY

**D**ROWSY, drowsy are the stars  
In the dark blue sky.  
The moon comes like the mother of the  
world  
And kisses them goodnight.  
One by one people shut up their day-  
tired eyes  
And sleep . . . and dream . . .  
Hiding behind the lilac bush  
I have heard dreams come.  
Drowsy, drowsy are the winds,  
Faint with almond petals,  
Rosy with the opening almond flowers;  
Tangled in almond boughs or plum  
boughs. . .  
Any Spring sweetness  
To bring the drowsy dreams. . . .

## PALM TREES

**P***ALM trees like old India shine . . .*  
I said to myself:  
But really they were folded elm-boughs  
Written in shadow  
On the grass.

## WHITE-CAPPED LAKE

**F**OAM comes and goes;  
Stones shine on the lake-bottom . . .  
Waves gurgle like bells.  
A maple curves over that lake  
To see its shadow.  
The lake is clear with dew and wind;  
The wind blows a little music  
To that tree.

All I have heard and seen and thought  
Will go away.  
The maple tree will be there still,  
But the bright water gone.  
The tree will bend until I think of the lake,  
make it real again,  
Make it shine again under green leaves  
Of my mind.

## THE FORGOTTEN RIVER

**T**HERE was a river in a dream I had  
Now it has gone.  
Now it lies lost  
At the bottom of my heart.  
Not till I find the gold at the end of the  
rainbow  
Can it stir and flow and live  
As other rivers do.

## WAKING THE MOTHS

**W**HITE as pearls would be on a  
bed of moss,  
I awake them one by one  
From their sleepy hours  
On the under side of meadow-grasses  
To their happy hours of flitting.  
I shake the grasses . . .  
They scatter softly . . .  
Airy and light and uncertain  
I watch them vanishing.



## WEEPING WILLOW

**D**ROOPING her eyes,  
Looking long into the skyblue lake,  
The willow stands on her island.  
Tears are falling gently;  
You cannot see them . . .  
What could comfort her?

Some day a wind will blow  
A western wind . . .  
Out of heaven's bosom  
A breeze will come flying with a harp around  
its neck. . .  
Into the willow branches it will fly  
And the harp will sing a happy tune.  
I know how they sing,  
Those harps of the wind,  
When the wind is sorry  
Or puzzled!

## COSTUME

**I** HAD ribbons the color of daffodils  
That are bells within bells:  
I had shoes with crystal heels  
To keep me dancing:  
I tossed my head under a cap  
With a tassel of cherries,  
And then I said and said once more  
My name is Miranda.

## SOUTH WIND

**W**HEN the south sang like a nightingale  
It was the hour bringing the tinted  
dawn.

Over the meadow's grassy breast  
I trod with trembling feet:  
I rested on moss:  
My thoughts glittered . . .  
I felt I could touch them.  
My hair was blowing . . . fell around  
me . . .  
I heard the nightingale wind  
Like magic in mist:  
It was then I said to the thick trees  
"Why try to pretend?  
You cannot hide the world from me:  
It is looking at me through your fingers."

## PINE TREE

**A** WAY in the great forest  
On the slope of a snow-capped mountain  
A lonely pine tree stood by itself.  
It had no one to love it:  
So I stayed all night  
Under its branches laden with snow.  
I did not mind the cold.



## CRYSTAL CAVE

(Bermuda)

**T**HE sea is quiet  
Within the cave . . .  
The sea hangs from a topaz thread  
In a silver bowl.  
The trembling sea  
Hangs and glitters  
And is gone.

## APRIL WITH VEILED ARMS

**A**PRIL with veiled arms  
And body like a swan's wing,  
Opal and bronze in your hair,  
Gold in your eyes,  
Are you a woman  
Out of the sea?  
Did you come last night  
From the uncurled wave?

## PEACE-OF-OUR-OWN

**S**ITTING alone in the peace-time  
When day turns shadowy  
My mother and I read . . . wonder . . .  
Make poems about beautiful things  
We have known and seen.  
I have names for many songs  
I have not yet made . . .  
*Iris . . . Sun-rays . . .*  
*Sun-down . . . or the Moon-Dark . . .*  
Or that queer blue song about a peacock feather.  
I never know why it is  
But whenever I listen  
In flies a poem.



## LONELY SONG

**B**END low, blue sky,  
Touch my forehead;  
You look cool . . . bend down . . .

Flow about me in your blueness and  
coolness,  
Be thistledown, be flowers,  
Be all the songs I have not yet sung.

Laugh at me, sky!  
Put a cap of cloud on my head,  
Blow it off with your blue winds . . .  
Give me a feeling of your laughter  
Beyond cloud and wind!  
I need to have you laugh at me  
As though you liked me a little.

## I THOUGHT

**I** THOUGHT the sea was honeycomb  
And all the waves were bees  
Humming cozily among the foam.  
I thought that white mulberry trees  
Shook their blossoms out all day  
In foam of honey, windy spray:  
And then I made a song of these  
After I got home.

## CLIFFACRE

**A** RAMBLING house on top of a cliff  
Overlooking a many-colored canyon  
Alone with the sunset,  
Alone with the dawn.  
Trees crowding down beyond the garden:  
A place where I should put food for wild  
animals . . .  
Through my big west windows  
I could watch them come and go.  
Sand along the cliff . . . cedars with berries like  
blue wax . . .  
Then the stable half-hidden where I shall keep  
my horses  
Barberry and Gray Glory,  
Just a tile-roofed shelter for them in a wing of  
sand  
Off at one side . . . but not too far . . .  
  
Where will it be? I think . . . in Wyoming.  
A cliff somewhere . . . I know I can find it . . .  
An acre of land for my house and garden.

## CLIFFACRE

I shall have a wild silver fox for a pet;  
He will learn my ways.  
Doors will stand always open . . .  
I shall do as I please all day in that house.  
There will be bowls  
For short-stemmed flowers;  
(I want all flowers that like that country  
To live in my garden . . .)  
There will be twenty-four vases  
To keep filled with roses.

## JEANNE D'ARC

**I** F I were Jeanne D'Arc  
It would be hard remembering the apple-  
orchard in bloom,  
With nothing about me but noise and armies,  
All men, all women, unhappy,  
No time for children (Let them be quiet!)  
No time for anybody  
But kings . . .  
And the appletrees all the time wondering . . .

## WILD CANARY

**L**IKE a lump of fresh gold  
You shine  
On an old dead tree you sit  
As though you were not a bird at all  
But trying your best to seem real,  
To give me a thought of wings.

## BOOKS

**B**OOKS, books that I love so,  
Poetry . . . fairy-tales . . . stories . . .  
All of them together make one huge book  
Broad as a mountain  
With golden pages  
And pictures of long ago.  
I read and I read . . . of living . . . of  
thoughts . . .  
Of queer things people tell:  
If I could I would buy that huge book,  
All the world in one!  
But it cannot be bought  
For one penny or two.

## I WAS THINKING

**I** WAS thinking  
The tenderness children need  
Is in soft shadow-things;  
Is a kind of magic . . .  
Petals of a dark pansy . . .  
Cloudy wings. . . .  
(But the sun can touch me  
With fingertips like flowers . . .)

And the tenderness children need  
Is in old thoughts and songs of all the world  
People have not forgotten . . .

It is in the way mothers look at tired children.  
It is in the half-voice fathers use  
Feeling some surprise and gladness  
To see their children there at all.



## BIG DIPPER

**T**HE Big Dipper spilled stars down over the  
roofs,  
I felt the way the wind whirled stars  
Over the town roofs. . . .

I felt the town asleep:  
I felt people there in the great crisp dark.  
When morning came in a waver of light  
There was a breath of change . . . all the  
dreams going away from the dreamers  
As dreams do go away in the morning.

A ring of hills . . . one river . . . some streets  
Make a design.  
Stars make a design  
And it is a Big Dipper  
Or the Pleiades like a bunch of grapes. . . .  
It is harder to say what the roofs mean:  
I don't know . . .  
Maybe I'm not yet far enough  
Away.

## NEVER-KNOWN

**T**HE chickadee taught me this river  
Through the goldenrod field:  
A river of blue light  
Going zigzag over the goldenrod  
In the sun.

I found a mountain . . .  
At least it was one to the ants and crickets:  
It was round soft turf,  
It had a dimple where a stone had been  
And a stalk of goldenrod  
Instead of an elm tree.

Once I saw a field full of gentians  
The color of mountains when they are far away.  
But this was an ordinary field  
Where a mouse could live quietly all his days  
Exploring his own country.  
Only to me it was different . . .  
To me it was a Never-Known  
With a blue river and a yellow jungle . . .

## NEVER-KNOWN

And while I was about it, I made my mountains  
    high,  
Feathery on top, as they do in maps,  
Curved feathers dropped along in handfuls  
Marked *Mts.*

## THIS DAY

**I** NEVER asked the day to be good to me  
Yet it has been sweet in its going.

This day began behind the moon  
Where all the white things come from.  
Thistledown comes from behind the moon,  
And that clearness of early hours. . . .  
But the clearness of this day turned into color  
When the sun came.

Now it is dark: now it is bedtime.  
I can see the color as though it had not gone,  
I can see it better than when it was here:  
Even the moon of those early hours of morning  
Is more like mother-of-pearl  
Or pink silver.

*Mother-of-pearl Moon,  
Your lonely face grows warm . . .  
You have changed all of a sudden . . .  
You make me think of flowers.*

## DESERTED HOUSE

**D**O you remember the house  
With many windows?  
It looked through its cobwebs  
At the blue mountain.  
There were old rosebushes near the doorstep . . .  
Queer bright single roses bloomed . . .  
I used to think of people  
Who had wanted them there.  
Maybe there was a little girl  
Going barefoot . . .  
Maybe she thought summer began  
With a rosebush.  
Do you remember the maples  
And the fence where we saw baby swallows  
In a row?

I made a song about a princess.  
She was a little girl . . .

*In the cobweb house of stone she is hidden . . .  
They have left her alone.*

## DESERTED HOUSE

*When she called no one answered . . .*

*They have left her alone.*

*She sang to keep her heart high . . .*

*They have left her alone.*

*But the silvery cold made her shiver and sleep*

*And her song went by.*

After that I made a story about her

Out of the old house:

I put roseleaves on her eyes . . .

(You know how sunset . . . every afternoon . . .

Used to fill the window-panes with colors

They had never known?)

## DRAGON FLY

**Y**OU jerk against the sun,  
You twist your diamond wires and green-  
gold scales,  
You tilt your body . . . head down . . .  
You quiver . . .  
Are you angry or only excited?  
I should think the ferns might be excited  
Feeling you there:  
And you never mention the reasons  
For your coming.  
Sure of your wings  
You have time in the air for thinking:  
You poise and are content.  
But only lizards among old stones  
Can find as you find the unexpected turning:  
You say *It is time to go!*  
And you have gone.

## I SHALL COME BACK

**I** SHALL be coming back to you  
From seas, rivers, sunny meadows,  
glens that hold secrets:  
I shall come back with my hands full  
Of light and flowers.  
Brooks braided in with sunbeams  
Will hang from my fingers.  
My heart will be awake . . .  
All my thoughts and joys will go to you.  
I shall bring back things I have picked up,  
Traveling this road or the other,  
Things found by the sea or in the pine-  
wood.  
There will be a pine-cone in my pocket,  
Grains of pink sand between my fingers.  
I shall tell you of a golden pheasant's  
feather;  
I shall tell you of stars like seaweed.  
Moons will glitter in my hair . . .  
Will you know me?  
I shall come back when sunset has turned  
away and gone,  
And you will untangle the moons  
And make me drowsy  
And put me to bed.

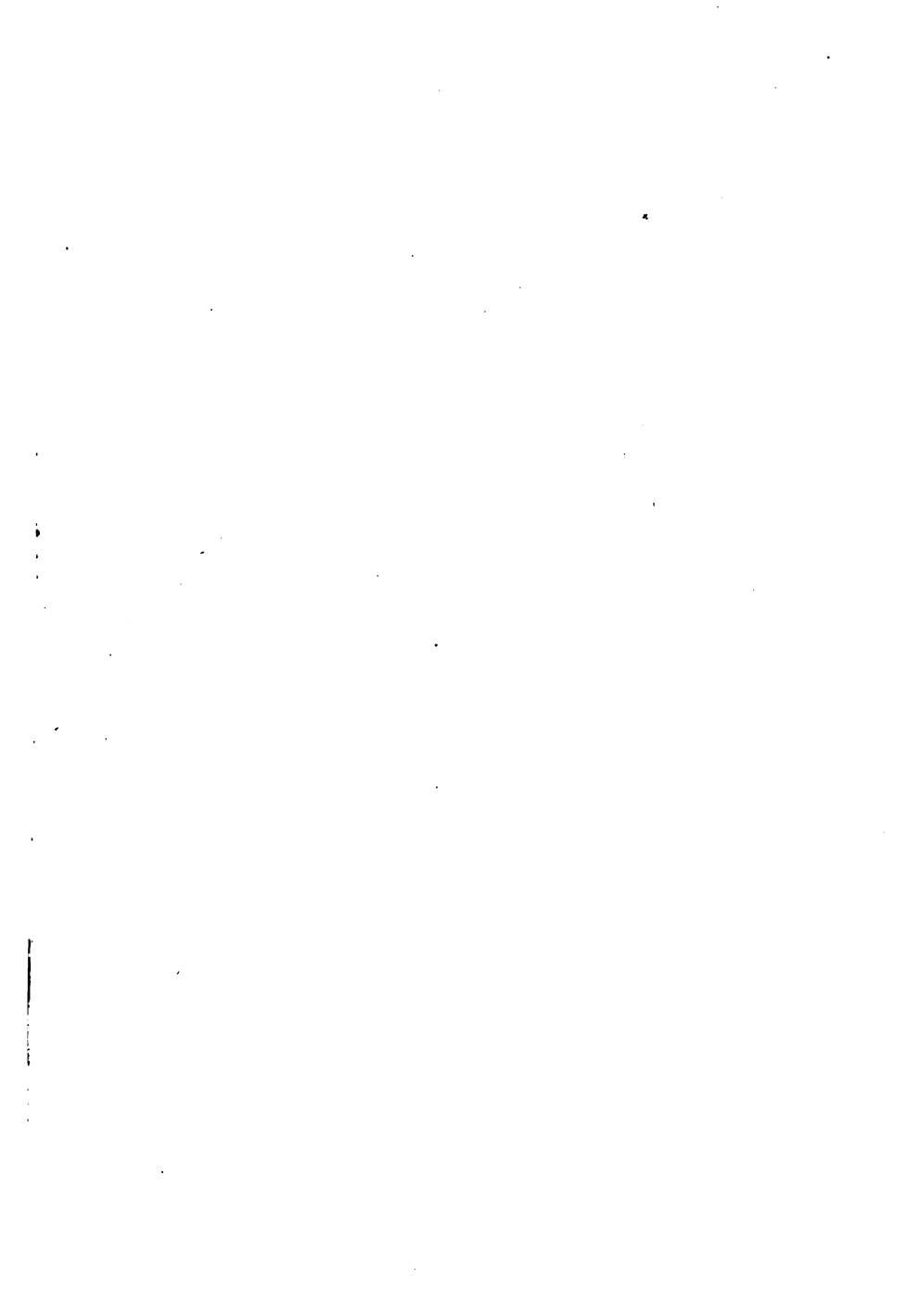


## TIME

**T**IME is a harp  
That plays to you till you fall asleep;  
You are always spending it away  
Like a music . . .  
Suddenly you are left alone  
On a trail of wind.

The mountains were asleep  
Long ago!  
Listen . . . the tune is changing . . .  
Do you hear it?  
You will sleep too  
Before long . . .

THE END



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